

PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 10, 2006

MINUTES

1. Called to order at 8:30 am by Marilyn Wilkinson.
2. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS
 - ♦ Renée Bahl - I would like to introduce a new member to our committee, John Carroll. John has been appointed by Supervisor Cox in District 1.
 - John Degenfelder – The Supervisor authorized a feasibility study for the Santa Maria Creek Greenway through Ramona.
 - Paul Davis – At the last meeting there was some talk about the NRPA conference and the possibility of some of us attending, so I was wondering if there was an update on that.
 - ♦ Renée Bahl - The next conference is not until the late summer or fall, but we will forward the information on once we receive it.
 - Paul Davis – I attended the California Farm Bureau meeting last week and there are a lot of similarities that we share with this group and that there could be some great opportunities for networking with this group. I can bring back information from these meetings.
 - Mike McCoy – I would like to have Trish Boaz come to the meeting quarterly or something to keep us up to date on the connectivity issues within the county. When the watershed management plan goes before the board I would like to know where we stand on these issues. The County is moving too quickly and I don't want us to lose our opportunities.
 - ♦ Renée Bahl - We have this on our calendars.
 - John Degenfelder – Tom Hart attended one of these meetings a while back and he got funded for a preliminary study for a trail by Ramona High School and he has completed the study and is moving forward.
3. Approval of December 9, 2005 Minutes
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MOTION TO APPROVE SEPTEMBER 9, 2005 MINUTES PAUL DAVIS, 2ND
ROGER UTT
ALL IN FAVOR – 6-0-1 (John Carroll abstained)
4. Distribution of January 13 and February 10, 2006 Notes
5. DEPARTMENT REPORT – Jason Hemmens
 - I have distributed our accomplishments for February, which you will see includes numerous items from last month.
 - We completed two new cabins at William Heise Park, which is a nice addition to the park, there is also a new wedding pavilion at Dos Picos County Park.
 - The Spring Valley Revitalization committee wanted to create high school activities and we came up with battle of the bands that happens every other month and we are getting 75 to 100 kids each month and it continues to grow.

- Regional Trails Symposium “Trails Connecting Communities” there were public agencies, stakeholders, and community members at the event.
- CPRS District XII held an annual event for the San Diego Region and DPR received numerous awards included Finney Overlook project, a lifetime achievement award for Melake Ghebrehiwet, Christine Lafontant received a health and wellness award, Doug Goad received a citation award for his work on trails and I received an award for my service within the group.
 - ♦ Renée Bahl – I would also like to announce that Jason is now the President Elect for our CPRS District XII.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- PLDO and CSA Fund Balance Reports – Eric Wong
 - ♦ Distributed handouts of the current PLDO and CSA fund balances.
 - ♦ We continue to have four CSA’s that are doing very well and some that are really struggling.
 - ♦ We issued a Request for Proposals for an Engineers Report for CSA 26 to do another ballot vote and are currently working on the contract. We are looking to possibly do another ballot in Fall 2006. Hopefully, if things go well with this, CSA 26 will have some money next year.
 - Marilyn Wilkinson – It is easier to find money to build a park, but it is extremely difficult to find the money to maintain a park or facility. It is a Board Policy that we do not purchase parks or facilities that we can’t maintain.
 - Paul Davis – If an area incorporates do they automatically have to take over the parks in the area?
 - Renée Bahl – If an area does incorporate they have the choice to work with us to see if they want us to keep the park and run it or if they want to try to take it over.
 - ♦ There has not been too many changes to the PLDO balances.
 - ♦ We are still trying to look into raising the PLDO fees and hopefully sometime this year we are planning to bring this up again, but nothing has happened yet.
- South Lane Park Hazardous Trees – Renée Bahl
 - ♦ South 10.5 acre park in Crest, which is a County local park. This is one of our parks that has a local maintenance entity.
 - ♦ We had 3 arborists go out and survey the park and 300 of the trees at the park were hazardous and planned to be felled.
 - ♦ Why don’t we have our guests introduce themselves for everyone.
 - Judy Bowen – Crest Planning Group and Chair of Parks subcommittee.
 - Khandi Franklin – President of the equestrian organization that leases the southern 5 acres of the park, working to establish the park as a linear park as well as an evacuation site for large animals.
 - Linda Chase – Director of the Fire Recovery Center in Crest and I have been working on assisting the families that lost their homes.
 - Linda Chase - Distributed a handout of the list of issues/concerns about how this project was handled.
 - Linda Chase - We had an old grove stand of eucalyptus trees in the park, which I understand are non-native trees in the area, but they survived the Cedar Fire and actually stopped the fire from continuing on its current path. I know that there were arborists that came out to the area, but we did not receive any reports from the arborists except for verbal confirmation. I think that psychologically and spiritually it would have been good for the

community to have more information on what was being done and maybe tried to save some of the older trees that have been a part of the community for a very long time. The work has already been done, so we are looking to work with the Parks department to find a way to keep our park and find a funding source to maintain the park because we do not have any funding at this time. They were dangerous because limbs were falling and we understand that, but we need to know where do we go from here and how can we use this committee to help us.

- Khandi Franklin – We still have about 100 homes that were burned in the Cedar fire that have not even started the process to rebuild. This is a community that has a lot of underlying anger and to see this park taken down is a very emotional and devastating event. There was an arborist report that was to my standards half done and I would've liked to see a full report on these trees. There is a plan for the area from 1989 that states numerous times trying to save the tree line and even the eucalyptus trees and this should be followed or if there is a change to the plan it needed to be presented to the community. It seemed like it was a hell bent for leather on this job because they actually had to change contractors on the project because of bond issues. We did have a community meeting and asked 8 questions and some of the answers were that the staff didn't know and we were told by the staff member that he would call us in the morning, this makes me feel that we were ignored and were not getting answers to our questions. I don't know if there is a secret agenda or something going on, but the community was not told about the plan and it is very disturbing.
- Judy Bowen – This is basically an unimproved park and we have had some ideas brought to us for the park, but we have an idea that we want the park to look like and we want it to stay very natural. We don't want grass
- ♦ Renée Bahl - I did say that our communication could have been better. The meetings that we had back in November 2005 and January 2006 were public information meetings and not public input meetings, which probably does not sit well with the ladies here today, but it should've been brought forward that way and could have been communicated more clearly.
- John Degenfelder – I would like to have a follow-up on the procedures for this type of project in the future.
- Jim Peugh – I am very worried that this was done by an arborist and not an environmental expert. I know that there are dead and dying trees in every healthy forest and that it is part of the natural system. Many of the birds and bugs rely on some dying trees to survive. I do understand and respect the need for safety in the parks, but some viable solutions are to use caution tape and section off dangerous areas. The San Diego Fire Recovery Network holds meetings, which consists of numerous biologists, environmentalists, fire experts, etc. I am not a fan of eucalyptus trees and generally like to see them removed.
- Paul Davis – It seems that there was a need to respond to the tree issues with roots that had been burned and the Federal government gave a timeframe and money to do this work and follow the requirements. I think that the Parks department had to conform and follow these various guidelines and requirements and do everything they could to comply. They have to take what is given to them and I think that they were doing the best that they could with the resources that they have and stand behind the department and their decisions.

- Marilyn Wilkinson – I went up to the area the other day and this is a beautiful piece of land and it is mostly surrounded by homes and I know that many of the children walk through the park to get to and from school every day and I am willing to work with the community and try to make a great plan for this area.
 - Mike McCoy – We have had similar situations in the past and I was thinking that if you are willing to look at this as an ecological unit and have a group that is pretty well organized there are individuals that can restore the property. It does cost some money, but if you put ecological restoration with an educational program you could get a grant for the area. There are also some trees on the pallet that are better for areas without a good water source.
 - Khandi Franklin – One of the sad things about the area is that now there is no shade the little grass that is at the park I expect will die off soon. I know that when people drove back up the hill it was so nice to see this section of green, it was like that area of hope for the community. We just need to know how to stop this from ever happening again.
 - Roger Utt – I think that we lost thousands of plants in the fires and parks did a good job on getting things back online and I think that this type of event is a wake-up call to county government that we need to listen to the communities.
- Land Acquisition Update – Barbara Simmons
 - ♦ We have acquired numerous properties in the last year including: Vessels property in the San Luis Rey area (116.56 acres); Bahde in the Harbison Canyon area (20.37 acres); Gardner Escondido (22.3 acres), Sandoval (11.31 acres), and Otay Land (113.10 acres) in the Otay Valley Regional Park area; and Ramseyer near Potrero (10.6 acres).
 - Mike McCoy - The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have been charged to get rid of some land, can the County get some of this land?
 - ♦ I know one of the goals of this program is to get this land back on the tax roll, so it would not be beneficial to them to give it to us.
 - ♦ We are always looking at areas throughout the County and when we are looking at a parcel we look at the connectivity and resources of the land to make decisions.
 - Jim Peugh – How does it work with the State and County plans and requirements for the MSCP?
 - ♦ We are at 50% of the planned area with 20 years left, so we are doing very well.
 - Paul Davis – Now that I have attended some of these other meetings I know that there are FFA groups, etc that work with animals is this something that Parks would be a part of?
 - ♦ Not for Parks and Recreation, but we have the Department of Agriculture and Farm and Home Advisor that would handle issues like this.
7. Opportunity for Members of Public to Speak on Any Items Not on Today's Agenda - None
8. ADJOURNMENT
- Meeting adjourned at 9:45 am by Marilyn Wilkinson.

ATTENDEES:

Mike McCoy, District 1

John Carroll, District 1
Marilyn Wilkinson, District 2
John Degenfelder, District 2
Paul Davis, District 3
Roger Utt, District 4
Jim Peugh, District 4
Renée Bahl, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation
Jason Hemmens, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation
Eric Wong, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation
Barbara Simmons, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation
Sabrina Hicks, County of San Diego Parks and Recreation